

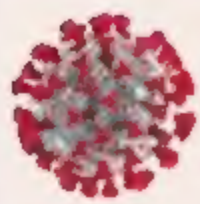


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ICMR POSITIVE, THIRD WAVE WILL WANE BY MID-MARCH

According to ICMR epidemiological head Samiran Panda, all states will see a drop in number of fresh Covid infections

CASES MAY DECLINE EARLIER IN SOME STATES

"We did a modelling study. We are projecting that by mid-March, all the states will see infections coming down," Panda told this newspaper. He said while some states will see infections go down earlier than mid-March, states that reported the Omicron variant later will need a little more time. But, by mid-March, the situation will be the same as before the third wave

NEED NOT PANIC ABOUT DELTACRON

■ When asked about infections caused by a combination of Delta and Omicron variants, Panda said, "It might not be fatal or fast-spreading. We need to be vigilant, but not panic"
■ He noted that recombination is possible with RNA virus, but stressed that we must ensure the detection system is working fine

98.28%

WAS INDIA'S COVID RECOVERY RATE
AS OF SUNDAY

Himalayan baba may actually be ex-FinMin babu

Conspiracy to establish ex-NSE top exec Subramanian as the outsider, say sources

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

THE CBI and tax authorities have swooped down on former MD & CEO of the National Stock Exchange Chitra Ramkrishna. However, they have not been able to find the identity of the so-called Himalayan baba who ran India's biggest stock exchange from behind the scenes.

Sources told this paper that this person is no baba and has nothing to do with the Himalayas, and is most likely from the other end of the country. They say he is a former bureaucrat from the Union finance ministry who was in charge of capital market and is credited with shaping the career of Ramkrishna and helping her reach the top at NSE.

Strongly rejecting the possibility of NSE's Chief Strategy Advisor Anand Subramanian being the baba, sources said there were people who wanted the matter closed by making Subramanian as the person who was communicating with Ramkrishna using the email id rigyajursama@outlook.com. If Subramanian is established as the baba, then the serious charge of leaking sensitive information to an outsider would

go away. This theory of Subramanian being the baba is also being pushed by the NSE board.

Sebi, however, has rejected this theory after a detailed investigation into the matter. Sebi investigation has also established that the NSE board had full knowledge of Ramkrishna sharing sensitive NSE information with an unknown person who used the email id rigyajursama@outlook.com. Yet, the board allowed her to resign and leave, and took no action against her. The board, in fact, thanked her for her services.

Sources said members of the board are also likely to be probed as investigation widens in the case. According to sources, the name of this bureaucrat who used the identity of a baba would come out if the CBI dives deep into the case. "But if the case is investigated like the co-location scam where NSE was allowed to get away with a fine, then the baba will remain a mystery," sources said.

They said that NSE's theory that Subramanian used the fake id in order to communicate with Ramkrishna and seek favours from her is deliberately misleading. **CONTINUED ON: P8**



Chitra Ramkrishna

KCR, Uddhav meet, lend weight to third front

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

TELANGANA Chief Minister and Telangana Rashtra Samithi chief K Chandrashekar Rao, who is trying to form a national coalition of likeminded parties to fight the BJP in the 2024 elections, on Sunday met his Maharashtra counterpart and Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar.

During the meetings, held separately at the hosts' residences, the need to defeat the BJP in the next Lok Sabha elections was discussed. Terming

the meeting with Thackeray "a good beginning", the Telangana leader said: "We are talking with other states leaders as well and very soon, there will be clarity over this new beginning."

Explaining the reason for seeking an end to BJP rule, Rao said, "The present political atmosphere is not good. There needs to have speed in development. People are weakening the country rather than strengthening it. Central agencies are misused."

Agreeing with KCR and targeting the BJP, Thackeray said the country desperately needs a



K Chandrashekar Rao with Uddhav Thackeray in Mumbai | P1

change, adding that the ongoing "politics of revenge" is neither Hindutva nor Indian culture.

The Shiv Sena leader said the country will soon witness a new political culture, anchored in harmony. "There will be a new beginning in the country's politics. It is a difficult way, but we have to put effort into finding this new path," he said.

However, NCP chief Sharad Pawar sought to distance himself from the new political front, claiming politics was not discussed during his meeting with KCR. "We discussed only development issues. The country is facing several major issues like unemployment, growing poverty, farmer suicides, etc."



An instructor shows a grenade during a training for members of an Ukrainian far-right group in Kyiv on Sunday | P2

Putin-Macron talks give peace a chance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

WITH war clouds hovering over Ukraine, French President Emmanuel Macron and Russian leader Vladimir Putin held a telephonic conversation on Sunday. The two leaders agreed to work towards a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, Macron's office said. During the conversation, which lasted 105 minutes, they also agreed on "the need to favour a diplomatic solution to the ongoing crisis and to do everything to achieve one". It said.

Though the talks have raised hopes, things on the ground continued to look dull on Sunday with Russia extending its military drill in Belarus involving a large number of troops, which was originally scheduled to end on Sunday. And the US said Putin's playbook for invasion of Ukraine is unfolding slowly but surely. "Everything leading up to the actual invasion appears to be taking place," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. "But until the tanks are actually rolling and the planes are flying, we will use every minute we have to see if diplomacy can still dissuade President Putin."

Meanwhile, the Indian embassy in Kyiv advised Indians to leave the country temporarily if their stay is not essential. Air India will operate three special flights to Kyiv's Boryspil International Airport on Feb 22, 24 and 26. **P9**
(With inputs from agencies)

Cong leaders to meet Rahul on Friday, may discuss hijab row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

Congress is in a fix over raising the hijab row in the Assembly and Council though it is raging across the state, while its members are aggressively demanding the resignation of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Minister KS Eshwarappa for his remarks over hoisting a saffron flag at the Red Fort.

In this background, the party's central leadership has invited the state leaders for a discussion

in New Delhi on Friday.

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is meeting state leaders, including KPCC president DK Shivakumar, Opposition Leaders in Assembly Siddaramaiah and Council BK Hariprasad and state Congress working presidents, ostensibly to discuss the blueprint for the 2023 Assembly elections. But party sources said the hijab issue and the party's stand on the raging controversy will also be discussed.

CONTINUED ON: P4

II PU practicals to be held today

DONNA EVA @ Bengaluru

PREPARATIONS have been made to hold the second PUC practical exams in Bengaluru North on Monday even as students are holding protests across the state over the hijab issue.

A source from the education department told The New Indian Express that parents have been requested not to protest outside educational institutions, while the police will provide security as there have been concerns over agitations preventing other students from attending the exam. **P2**

Poll day largely peaceful in UP, Punjab

There were no reports of major violence from the two states

PUNJAB
63.4% voter turnout till 5 pm
73.45% turnout in Mansa constituency

IAF chopper rescues teen trekker at Nandi Hills

V VELAYUDHAM
@ Chikkaballapur

AN 18-year-old boy from Delhi studying in Bengaluru, who had gone for trekking in Nandi Hills alone, fell into a deep gorge of nearly 300 feet and was rescued by an IAF helicopter on Sunday.

The boy, Nishank, who had sustained severe injuries, has been admitted to a private hospital in Bengaluru, said Central Range Inspector General of Police M Chandrashekar.

Nishank, who is a first-year computer science student at PES University, was exploring a new route to reach the top of steep and rocky Nandi Hills when he slipped and fell, said Chikkaballapur Deputy Commissioner R Latha.

Though he had fallen into the gorge, his phone was working and he could dial the police control room. He told the police about the incident and also sent his location through the mobile to the police. **P2**

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- Policyholder's PAN details should be updated with the Corporation on or before February 28, 2022.

* Please also refer draft red herring prospectus dated February 13, 2022

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CDSL: <https://www.cdslindia.com/DP/dplist.aspx>

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